

The Coming Day.

MARCH, 1899.

A PIONEER CHURCH.

SPOKEN AT CROYDON.

THE Anniversary of the founding of this Church makes it natural for us, and desirable, to 'beat the bounds,' and with the old significance of that quaint old custom,—that we may keep in mind our whereabouts, and be familiar with our bearings.

This little Church did not add another to the sects, or contribute another tabernacle to a sect. It was and is, rather, a testimony in favour of universality, and against the notion that any one creed or church can enshrine all the truth.

A late writer has given us an amusing but fairly accurate description of the condition of what we call the religious world:—'We find the same thing everywhere. Every man is declaring that if you spill a drop out of his pint-cup the ocean will run dry. The Episcopal Church is busy, asserting its divine authority; the Baptists are keeping watch against open communion; the orthodox churches are keen set against heresy; the liberal churches think their gospel is the world's only hope; the Protestants are all banning the Pope, and the Pope puts a bigger ban on all the Protestants.' Our vocation is the very reverse of that.

Now, everything turns upon authority. Who is it, or what is it that we must recognise as the authority, if there is one? The Papal and the Episcopal Churches agree fundamentally that the authority is the Church represented by the Pope, the Bishops and the Priests. The Evangelical Nonconformists appeal to the Bible only. We hold by God speaking through reason and conscience. This is the fundamental difference, and from it all differences spring. All schools of thought are beginning to see this. Even the Roman Catholic Church has its doctrine of development very prominent in the cry, 'Hear the Church!'

Lecky says that if our modes of thought could have been put before a Christian of the 12th century, he would have said that they involved the absolute destruction of Christianity. A well-known clergyman of the Established Church said a few days ago, 'Not a single article of the Christian creed do modern Christians understand in quite the former sense.'

In addition to this fundamental difference which still sharply exists, there are the old doctrinal and ethical reasons for founding this Church, and these, in some quarters, are nearly as urgent as ever.

From a heap of tracts sent me, undoubtedly for my good, I select one as a fair specimen. Here is the conclusion :—

You cannot be saved, except as a guilty, lost sinner ; and as a guilty, lost sinner you must be redeemed by another than yourself. The work of redemption lies outside of you. The atonement, through which God can pardon your sins, was made by Jesus on the cross. God is satisfied to accept it for you. The moment you are really satisfied with it for yourself, and thus accept it, you will have 'redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' (Col. i. 14.) But if you reject His message, and trample on His love, either by trying to earn your own salvation, or by utterly turning your back upon God, the fearful weight of your sins will sink you into the abyss of Hell, there to spend the never-ending eternity amid everlasting burnings, tortured by hopeless remorse for having rejected a Saviour so freely offered to you.

God grant, dear reader, that you may be enabled to say with me, when thinking of my former and my present state, What then ?—Hell ! What now ?—Heaven !

If this Church were not in existence it would clearly have to be born.

You know my own ideal, for this country, as things are,—a vast, free, comprehensive national Church, but not theologically and religiously controlled by the State.

Lord Amberley once put it well :—

A body of educated men, not bound to one special cast of religious faith, nor each insisting upon his own creed as the one thing needful ; a clergy not purely sectarian, but containing men of opposite modes of thought, yet all contributing to the grand object of instructing, improving, civilising the people ; diversity rather than unity recognised as the true ideal ; above all, individual speculation not forbidden but sanctioned by law—all this is so contrary to the ordinary notions of a Church, that it is not surprising if many are unwilling to regard it as either possible or desirable. Neverthe-

less, if there are any who consider the kind of institution that has been thus imperfectly sketched out, as something too theoretical, too visionary, too remote from anything hitherto known to be capable of real existence, let them earnestly consider the position and prospects of the Church of England, in relation to the general current of European thought. As to the direction of that current it is almost superfluous to speak. It is recognised by bishops in their charges as fully and explicitly as by philosophical thinkers like Mr. Lecky.

And what is the direction of the current of religious thought in Europe? It admits of no doubt:—it is all away from the medieval theory of the Church, and the medieval base of doctrine.

No really impartial onlooker can doubt for a moment that modern knowledge and modern civilisation have killed the old creeds of medieval ignorance and brutality. A very prominent clergyman of the Established Church lately said, in a sermon, 'Science had come as a cat among the pigeons, and had sent flying in all directions the elements of the ancient theology.' Then he went on to specify, and said we must fall back on first principles!

It seems ridiculous to claim that such an insignificant Church as this is the only representative in Croydon of the modern spirit of universality and rationalism. But it is a fact.

I often think our vocation is far too great for us: and, as I lately said, I often see with sorrow that people may be educated in freedom and rationalism beyond their capacity, just as some people have been personally wrecked by having a fortune left them. Will it not be a sorrowful discovery if, after all, we find that the orthodox are right—and that we need the urgings and inducements of fear?

When I think of the great vocation of this Church, and of its unique position and testimony, I call to mind that fervid appeal of Milton in the beginning of 'Paradise Lost':—

And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer,
Before all temples, the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou knowest; thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant. What in me is dark
Illumine; what is low, raise and support,
That, to the height of this great argument,
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Yes! That is what we all need,—that we may rise to ‘the height of this great argument.’ What a splendid Church it would be if even half of us could do it!

That we are either misunderstood or undervalued, or that we are unpopular, ought to be, and, with noble spirits, would be a reason for sturdier fidelity. And fidelity would really mean so little, after all, for us. If men and women, in days gone by, could burn for their faith and Church, cannot we, for their sakes, bear to be a little out in the cold? Is the stuff of which martyrs were made utterly used up?

I read, the other day, a fine tonic speech made to an assembly of Jews, by one of their teachers; and I felt how, in spirit, it applied to us. Listen!

Remember that if you would guard your children against race prejudice, you and they must rise superior to it. You can no more escape bigotry by shrinking from Jewish designations, habits, customs or religious practices than the ostrich can escape his pursuers by burying his head in the sand. Be brave, and teach your children courage. Do not obtrude your race or religion upon public notice, but never withdraw them from the eye of friend or foe. They are here, parts of yourself, and you stamp yourself an inferior whenever you shrink from the name or responsibilities of your people or your creed. Nothing excites such contempt and hatred as disloyalty.

We need not pursue that subject, but it would be a grave neglect of duty if, on such a day as this, we did not look up at our standard,—and note how far short of it we come.

Here is an even more spirited appeal by Dr. Hermann Adler, at the consecration of a Jewish synagogue;

Come here with your wives and children to worship the God of your fathers. Pray do not delude yourselves by saying, I am a good Jew in my heart. What would you think of a soldier who, while the battle is raging, runs away from his flag, and who, when arraigned before a court-martial, would justify himself by saying, ‘I am a good soldier in my heart’? Surely this plea would not avail him. He would be branded for ever; ay, he would be shot as a base deserter. For the sake of yourselves, for the sake of your wives and children, do not deprive yourselves of that solace, that stay and support, which religion alone can bestow.

What more could I say than that? I will then leave it there. Let the Christian be instructed by the Jew!

THE ALLEGED PROPHECIES CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTA- MENT.

SIX LECTURES—REVISED.

LECTURE V.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

THERE is something so supremely ridiculous about the allegation that the Song of Solomon was intended to be a spiritual allegory of the tender relation between Christ and the Church, that only the most overwhelming evidence would serve to convince any one that this was seriously maintained. But, maintained it is, as any one knows who is acquainted with the average teaching given from the ordinary pulpits. But the very headings of the chapters suffice: for the translators of the authorised version, assuming with cool audacity or childlike simplicity that the Song did tell the story of the relationship between Christ and the Church, have placed a commentary at the head of every chapter: and these commentaries, when combined, form the following "orthodox" view of the book:—

The church's love unto Christ. She confesseth her deformity, and prayeth to be directed to his flock. Christ directeth her to the shepherds' tents: and shewing his love to her, giveth her gracious promises. The church and Christ congratulate one another. The mutual love of Christ and his church. The hope and calling of the church. Christ's care of the church. The profession of the church, her faith and hope. The church's fight and victory in temptation. The church glorieth in Christ. Christ setteth forth the graces of the church. He sheweth his love to her. The church prayeth to be made fit for his presence. Christ awaketh the church with his calling. The church having a taste of Christ's love is sick of love. A description of Christ by his graces. The church professeth her faith in Christ. Christ sheweth the graces of the church, and his love towards her. A further description of the church's graces. The church professeth her faith and desire. The love of the church to Christ. The vehemency of love. The calling of the Gentiles. The church prayeth for Christ's coming.

Matthew Henry, quaintest, shrewdest and yet most orthodox of commentators, though he solemnly asserts the ordinary orthodox view, confesses that 'it seems as hard as any part of

Scripture to be made 'a savour of life unto life.' The Jewish doctors, he says, advised their young people not to read it till they were 30. He admits further, that the name of God is not in it, that it is never quoted in the New Testament, and that it has not in it 'any expressions of natural religion or pious devotion.' He goes so far as to say that we need to forget that we have bodies in studying it. He expresses the opinion, however, that it is a most profound book: 'there are depths in it,' he says, 'in which an elephant may swim.' He is right: and he might have added—in which an army of commentators might drown. 'It requires some pains,' says this commentator, 'to find out what may probably be the meaning of the Holy Spirit, in the several parts of this book,'—a commentator's way of saying, —It is really very difficult to make anything of it! and yet we are warned that we may 'wrest it' to our 'destruction.' A famous divine, quoted by Matthew Henry, says that if we ridicule this book, *i.e.*, if we do not believe it is an allegory of Christ and the Church, we are 'guilty of blasphemy against the Most High.' 'Why will you set God at defiance?' he asks, 'and add fresh fuel to His wrath?' Now it is perhaps difficult for some people to institute a really free examination of the book, in the face of such fearful threats, but I am going to do it, having long ceased to pay any attention to the threats of theologians. But I shall not 'ridicule' this book, I shall only tell part of the truth about it.

First, as to the author. The book is attributed to Solomon—but it is very doubtful whether he wrote a word of it. If he did, it has a suspicious origin. The commentators say that 'Solomon's songs were a thousand and five,' and the Book of Kings says that he had a thousand wives and concubines. The coincidence is curious. This gives us a lady for every song, with five songs to spare; but, as the Book of Kings also tells us that, in addition to the thousand, he 'loved many strange women,' the spare songs are easily accounted for. Now, if any one calls that ridiculing the Book, all I can say is,—it is not meant as ridicule; it is meant as a plain statement of fact concerning the very significant and important question of author-

ship; for when the commentator says, 'It is not certain when Solomon penned this sacred song,' it suggests that if he penned it at all, he penned it with far more reference to concubines than to Christ; and it sustains me in the assertion that one of the greatest scandals of Christendom is that the passionate, sensuous and, in some cases, indecent language of a love poem like this should be applied to Christ: for it is only by a treatment of it which is both arbitrary and grotesque that it can be made even passably reputable.

After the point of authorship, comes the question of intention: and here the interest centres. But the intention lies, only too manifestly, on the surface. The book is an unmitigated love poem; and no one would have been more astonished than the author, to hear people gravely putting a religious and mystical meaning into it. A few local and personal references will make this plain:—Chapter i. 5:—

I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

Chapter ii. 7:—

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

Chapter iii. 7-10:—

Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night. King Solomon made himself a chariot (or, a bed) of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

Chapter viii. 11-13:—

Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver. My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand and those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred. Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.

In addition to these personal and local references that prove intention, the actual narrative and the style of it are, of course, important evidence. I freely admit that there are a few lovely touches in

the poem—as exquisite as anything Thomas Moore ever wrote—but, mixed up with these, are passages of the most questionable character—contemptible as third-class love poetry—frightful as allegorical of Christ and the Church. Take this, for instance. Chapter iv. 1-5 :—

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely; thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

I dare not read you the amazing description in chapter vii.; but Bishop Patrick says of the highly indecent second verse, that it refers to the baptismal font and to the Lord's Supper. To show you, however, how the commentators 'wrest' the thing to their 'destruction,' I will point out how Matthew Henry deals with the passage I just read. The song says that the beloved one's hair 'is as a flock of goats'—a most outrageous comparison; but the commentator, nothing daunted, drags in the hair of the Magdalene and the passage, —'the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' The song says that her teeth are 'like a flock of sheep, that are even shorn, which come up from the washing:' again an outrageous comparison, but the commentator says that, by teeth, 'ministers' are meant, for, says he, 'they, as nurses, chew the meat for the babes of Christ,'—an unconsciously true saying; for it is too often the case that ministers treat their hearers as babes, and keep them so, even to the chewing of their intellectual food for them,—to use the commentator's simile. The song says her lips are like a thread of scarlet, and what this means is evident,—that she had pretty, bright, red, thin lips:—but the grave divine sees in the scarlet lips 'the blood of Christ' in which, he says, we are to be washed. And so the ridiculous far-fetched allegorising goes on; and the commentator who warned us against wresting the Book to our destruction, wrests it with a vengeance to his own.

A third point is the plot, or the characters that appear in the poem. The popular orthodox view gives us just two characters—Christ and the Church; but this lands us in endless confusion; for no two people, however absurdly in love, ever talked so incoherently, debated so unreasonably, acted so ridiculously, quarrelled, flirted and contradicted one another so bewilderingly. In fact, if only two persons form the *dramatis personæ*, one or both of them must be insane. The only lucid explanation is that several persons speak during the poem—that, in fact, the poem is either a series of amatory pieces, or a kind of love play. This is the view now held by the very best authorities, who have gone so far as to disentangle the parts of the various characters, and to give us the play in regular dramatic form. The characters are, say, at least six; and the poem or play is divided into about ten acts: so says Sharpe the translator. The characters are,—the Bride, called Shulamite; Solomon, and attendants. Shulamite is only the Hebrew feminine form of Solomon. Solomon and Shulamite, therefore, are similar to our Charles and Charlotte, Henry and Henrietta. It is easy to prove that there are more than the two characters concerned—the Bride and Solomon. Take, for instance, chapter vi. 1-3.—

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee. My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

Who asks that question in verse 1? It is evidently some one who addressed the Bride; and, as she is asked where her beloved is gone, the questioner cannot be the beloved. It must be some third character. Early in the Book, a curious instance of this occurs. Some one (of course the Bride) is made to say, 'I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.' Spoken by one person, this is the most contradictory incoherence. She is made to say she is 'black' (or sunburnt) and yet 'comely;' like the dark tents of Kedar, and yet like the beautiful curtains of Solomon.

The sense is seen for the first time when the verse is treated as a kind of dialogue, or soliloquy and chorus. The Bride laments—‘I am sun-tanned!’ then the women-chorus respond,—‘but comely.’ ‘Like the dark tents of Kedar!’ she mourns: ‘like the lovely curtains of Solomon,’ they reply. This is genuine love poetry, and is pretty enough in its way. It only becomes grotesque and nonsensical when grave divines take it on their reverend lips, and try to make it serve the purposes of religion.

Thus whether we consider the reputed authorship of the poem, the evident intention of it, gathered from the local and personal references in it and from the character of the narrative and the style, or the characters that appear in the poem, it seems plain that the Book is just what it appears to be,—a love-poem or amatory play, neither better nor worse than a multitude of oriental songs of the same nature.

A detailed examination of the poem would abundantly shew this:—one little illustration must suffice; and I quote this because I can give it to you in the words of an accredited orthodox commentator, the late Dr. Eadie. Explaining the word ‘Shulamite,’ (chapter vi. 13,) he says, ‘In the passage, the scene lies in a garden, where the bride was unexpectedly seen by her lover. At once she retires. Her lover exclaims in ardour,—

Return, return, Shulamith,
Return, return, that I may look upon thee.

Such being contrary to Oriental manners and etiquette, she promptly and indignantly replies,—

What! will ye gaze upon Shulamith
As ye would upon a troupe of dancing girls?

In the authorised version, this absurdity reads like a question and answer; ‘What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies:’—a marvellously insane reply! But even Dr. Eadie, with his keen eye to the true character of this love-making scene, indulges in the usual orthodox somnambulism, and says that this name Shulamite is ‘a poetical figurative title of the church personified.’

What lesson, then, do we learn from this

exposure of the vain imaginations of theory-makers—from this glance at the gross absurdities into which men may fall who once forsake the homely ways of simple common sense? I think the lesson is simply this,—that we should be guided in all things by sober reasoning and solid fact. When we read the Bible, we should read it with our eyes open, and with our ordinary faculties on the alert: we should not seek far-fetched meanings, and give way to loose imaginations; but in all things rely upon common sense, and stick to the plain and obvious interpretation. If what is written is bad, let us frankly say so; if it is foolish or erroneous, let us honestly admit it: for, to be bound by a theory of inspiration that prevents our being reasonable and honest, can neither be right nor good.

Thank God, all this is possible for us who worship here; for we are free to inquire, and to follow out any result of our inquiry: and, above all, we are delivered from the injurious old superstition that acceptance with God depends upon any opinion we come to respecting Church, or creed, or book.

AN INFIDEL TRACT.

AN infidel tract has been sent us, for special notice. It is one of the 'Tidings of peace series,' and is entitled 'The future of the lost.' The author is 'W. H. S.,' which might just as well stand for Wild Howling Savage as for anything else. The publisher is A. S. Rouse, Paternoster Square. We call it an 'infidel' tract because it strikes at the very root of all faith in a just and holy God, and because the likeliest effect of it will be to increase the growing denial of the utility and authority of the Bible. The writer takes the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and, by intensifying its pictures and pushing home its statements, extracts the following conclusions: 'The rich man closed his eyes upon the pleasures

of this world and opened them to behold the fire of hell.' 'In eternity everything is fixed and unalterable.' 'Once in hell always in hell.' 'There will be no mercy in hell.' 'If man wishes for mercy he must find it in this world, or he will never find it.'

If this is a correct reading of the parable, to what conclusion are we driven,—we who want to respect, reverence and trust a just and holy God? We are driven to deny the truth of the parable; and, if we also want to respect, reverence and trust Jesus, we must deny that he ever said or meant anything so detestable.

But 'W. H. S.' says that this appeal to the justice and mercy of God is a devil's lie, and that 'the soul-damning delusion' is spreading rapidly. This 'soul-damning delusion' is specially described as the delusion that 'though God may send a man to hell for his sins, He is too merciful to keep him there for ever, and that sooner or later He will release him: the fire shall but purge away the dross.' This touch of mercy is the devil's 'lie,' we are told.

What, then, is necessary to avoid all this awful doom? Not mental honesty, not fidelity to Nature's laws, not even personal goodness: no; to hell every one of us must go if we 'die without Christ,' and dying without Christ is defined as—'dying in the very atmosphere of seeming sanctity it may be, but unwashed in Jesus' blood.' What insane incoherence! What does this savage mean by being 'washed in Jesus' blood'? and why should God make salvation turn upon anything so horrid and so arbitrary? But this is not all. Having got his endless hell for the unwashed in blood, our savage sets to work to turn heaven into a sort of hell for the merciful. There must be millions there who would like to go and help 'the lost.' On earth, they found all their joy in pity and helpfulness. But heaven will alter all that. The demon-God of heaven will not let them go. He will compel them to be happy by becoming as selfish and pitiless as He is; or He will let them be miserable for ever in their thwarted pity. We are told: 'If any in heaven were disposed to help the lost man, they could not . . .

None in heaven can succour those in hell.' What a heaven! What a God! And we may add, of this whole scheme, what a malignant and wicked lie!

DR. COIT'S ETHICAL LECTURES.

WE have received six 'Ethical Lectures,' by Dr. Stanton Coit. (London: The Ethical World Publishing Co.) They are pleasantly printed as high-class pamphlets, though only twopence each. The subjects are; 'The Ethical movement defined,' 'The Ten Commandments,' 'The Lord's Prayer,' 'The Sermon on the Mount,' 'The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,' and 'What think ye of Christ?' On each of these subjects, Dr. Coit has much to say that is arrestingly novel. Excluding the great illusion of a personal God and Immortality (or, as he would prefer to say, of belief in the saving power of belief in God, &c.), he sets up righteousness as God, and interprets all by that one supreme faith or fact. The process is curious: the product is highly interesting. The lecture on 'The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper' is profoundly original. In some respects, we are far off from Dr. Coit's ideas: in others, we are greatly drawn to them. In any case, we find him in these lectures engaging and suggestive in a very high degree.

Almost uniformly, Dr. Coit is persuasive, discriminating, temperate, we had almost written 'gentlemanly;' but, on one page, he suddenly blazes up in this volcanic fashion;—

How can any thinking man, for a moment, count as other than childish the notion that the worth of Christ could depend upon Christ's parentage? If a person is to be worshipped, it must be because of what he is, and not on account of how or by whom he was conceived. No doctrine of the hereditary taint of evil inevitably transmitted to each human being can be satisfied with the clause, 'conceived by the Holy Ghost.' The Virgin must have been immaculate, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Whatever anyone may think of Christ's parentage, if he counts the marital relation sacred, and if he judges men by their own worth, and not by their origin, he must reject this dogma in the Apostle's Creed as unclean in its insinuations, and crude in its methods of moral reasoning.

It makes no difference what any man thinks of Christ's

parentage. Yet everyone who thinks he must have had a human father and dares to say so, is branded to-day as a heretic, and shut out from the historic communion of men in their devotion to the Moral Ideal. Whoever, on the other hand, believes Christ had a human father, and yet by keeping still holds the office of preacher in the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist or Methodist Church, is a perjurer and a thief. He has bought the opportunity of doing good within the Church at the price of his own soul. His honour is in dishonour rooted. Every act he performs in fulfilment of the vows of his office is a lie.

These words are not rude, nor too strong. I, too, might steal into the fold, and possibly climb up the bishop's sleeve, as honestly as any of the men who think as I do about the moral value of these dogmas, and who yet take 'holy orders;' but I know, by the strange and irresistible tumult of my own conscience at the thought of so doing, that the crime of men who enter the pulpits, while they in their hearts reject the accepted theology of the congregations, is on a par with the crime of him who murders his own brother, or steals bread out of the mouths of widows and orphans. . . . Theirs is straight, direct, against the most high—against God—against Morality, on the very altar where it is set up as an object of worship—against the only Power that saves society from becoming a den of thieves. They look straight into the eyes of God, and lie.

What think ye of Christ's parentage? Let us not trouble to think about it at all.

What think ye of ethical teachers in pulpits who with their lips profess belief in the Virgin Mother of Christ and so imply that that belief has moral worth, but in their hearts hold no such thought at all?

TURKISH FATALISM.

AN American druggists' journal quotes from a German paper the following results of an attempt, on the part of a French official, to get statistics from Turkish communities. The journal says that if the story is not genuine it might well be,—as a good holding up of the mirror to nature;—

A French official of the Bureau of Mortuary Statistics of Paris wrote to an official in Constantinople holding a similar position under the Turkish Government, enclosing blank forms containing the following queries:

1. What is the average annual rate of mortality in your city?
2. What is the average annual birth-rate?

3. What regulations exist in regard to your water-supply?

4. What, approximately, is the value of the annual importations of medical supplies?

5. What is the value of the exports of same?

6. Please insert here any remarks or information you may have in regard to general sanitary conditions in your city or province.

The official at Constantinople endorsed the blanks, and had them sent to the various cities named in the Frenchman's communication, and, after a while, there came from Damascus one of the documents filled out as follows:

'1. Here in Damascus every one dies according to the will of Allah—some old, some young, as he appoints.

'2. We do not know this. Allah alone knows it.

'3. As long as the memory of man runneth backward, no man or woman or child hath died in Damascus from want of water.

'4 and 5. Therefore have we never worried—and how can it be possible that we should know how many laden camels come in or go out of Damascus, or with what they are laden?

'6. Since the time when Allah sent unto us his Prophet, Mohammed, and he, the Prophet, blessed be his name, purged and cleansed the world with fire and sword—since then, I say, a good many things have become better. But, yet, there remains much to be done, and everywhere there is opportunity to help and to do good. And, now, O thou, my lamb of comfort, the apple of the eye of the West, hearken unto me, and cease to question. It profiteth neither thee, nor me, nor any one else soever. It is not good that man should trouble himself about things that belong to Allah alone to know! Salaam aleikum—peace be with thee.'

A NEW BEAUTIFIER.

'HONESTY is the best beautifier,' says *The Progressive Thinker*, basing that idea on the faith and work of a new Society in Chicago which teaches that truth suits the complexion better than anything else. Lies and shams discolour the skin and give all sorts of sinister little twists and pinches to the features, we are assured, 'Handsome is as handsome does' is true after all, it seems.

But the Chicago beautifiers give reasons. Here are some ;

Every fib a man or woman tells, every insincere thought or action even, helps to rob him of the perfect purity and whiteness of skin, the wide and open glance of the eyes, noticeable in a little child.

It does this because insincerity, wrong-doing of any kind, poisons the secretions of the system, spoils the work of the stomach and digestive organs, and produces a tendency towards biliousness, which is as we all know, disastrous in its effects upon the skin. Persisted in, lying and falsifying will bring the shifty glance, sallow or reddened skin and loose mouth noticeable in the professional thief or liar. For lying, even the slightest prevarication, spoils every part of the physical development alike. No liar ever stands up as straight as the truly honest man ; no fibbing woman ever has as sweet and tender a mouth as her truthful sister. The complexion fades first merely because it happens to be entirely dependent upon the interior condition of the body. With the poor digestion and unpleasant breath resulting upon the constant telling of lies or indulging insincerity of thought or action the wretched or darkened complexion must necessarily and inevitably result. Let the victim of this condition go back to the truthfulness natural to an innocent child, and the complexion will, in course of time, renew its childlike purity. The really truthful woman, for instance, will possess a complexion like a baby's for softness of touch and coloring, and her breath will be as pure and sweet as that of a little child.

The Chicago beautifiers, of course, are not so illogical as to draw the conclusion that all bilious people, &c., are liars. There are other causes of bad complexions.

Unhappily, telling the truth and being perfectly honest is not over easy. One dear little woman has been telling her troubles. Her truth-telling brought her into woeful scrapes. Her friends cut her ; and, at last, she was left with only her husband and baby, and a girl whom she had told that she was both clever and pretty. But she got her reward ; for she winds up by

saying ; 'The only comfort left me in life is the fact that my complexion is decidedly improving. And since I began to tell the truth always, I simply can't freckle or tan, no matter how much I'm exposed to the hot sunshine.' We are truly glad to hear that ;—a beautiful case of virtue rewarded ! We are glad also that Chicago is getting this new gospel of truth and simple honesty preached. If all we hear is true, it needs it. The lady who has had most to do with getting up this Society, and who knows Chicago well, says ;

It's really a good work to induce people to stop lying, no matter how you do it. If the hope of securing a perfect complexion—and it's a hope founded on honest facts, too—will persuade 'em to do it, all the better both for their morals and facial beauty. Stop telling untruths and thinking them, and your skin will be white and lovely enough for anything.

CITIES AND THE HIGHER CIVILISATION.

IN THE COMING DAY for January, we noticed Mr. Howard's striking book, 'To-morrow.' Mr. Howard writes to us in a hopeful, certainly in an ardent tone. He seems to have some prospect of assistance from men of wealth, but he hopes that 'all who may read his book and are convinced of the essential soundness of his proposals will in the measure of their power strive to bring about the result, and not throw the responsibility upon millionaires, who may or may not be found to discharge it. The first thing to be done is to form a Propaganda Association, and this is in process.'

He sends us the following interesting letter from Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace.

Parkstone, Dorset,

DEAR MR. HOWARD, January 11th, 1899.

I am greatly interested by your scheme of building Garden Cities as a means of checking the further growth of our already overgrown and hideous centres of population, and creating more healthy and enjoyable opportunities of life for every class of our people.

The proposals in your little book 'To-morrow' embody two great features of vital importance :—(1). The laying out and building of towns or cities with every provision for health and enjoyment, with central parks and gardens, grand avenues and wide roads, with an ample area of open country around them, devoted to gardens, fields, meadows and woodlands, but

never to be built upon. And—(2). The securing that the whole of this land shall, after a few years, become the property of the city itself, the rentals of which will probably be more than sufficient for all public purposes, including not only the supply of water and light, but also of free education and free locomotion within the city limits for all.

I feel sure that your plans are perfectly practicable, and are calculated to secure, even under existing laws and customs, the maximum of good with the minimum of evil results. In fact, it seems to me that the results must be wholly good: and by the multiplication of such cities this good can be brought to our whole population.

There is nothing in your proposals that should be distasteful to any sect or political party, and they are therefore calculated to enlist the sympathies and secure the assistance of all. They offer, in particular, an opportunity for benevolent millionaires to apply some of their wealth for the benefit of their fellow-creatures in a way that is at once safe, conspicuous and permanent.

My earnest wishes are for the success of your scheme, which I hope I may live to see at least partially carried into practice.

Believe me,

Yours very faithfully,

ALFRED R. WALLACE.

THE NEW ORTHODOXY.

THE curiously subtle magazine, called *New Orthodoxy*, lately printed the following:—

The world had to move on to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and on it still will have to move. This is the cause of modern unrest in religious thought. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was a part of a movement larger than itself—the Renaissance—the awakening of the human mind after the sleep of ages. We are to-day in the mid-process of that movement. The rise and advance of science, the re-birth of philosophy, the growth of criticism, are its products, since the results of the Reformation were embodied in the confessions that lie at the basis of our great Protestant Churches. The liberation of the human mind at the Reformation has made a new Reformation necessary. The religious unrest of our times means that the traditional faith has come into conflict with the modern spirit, with an awakened mind and heart and reason. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was a compromise. Its theology was the theology of the mediæval Church which it attempted to reform, and did in part reform. The revolt from the mediæval Church has, in time, brought about a new revolt from the mediæval theology. This revolt we see on all hands around us to-day, and therefore it is not to be regarded as coming from an evil heart of unbelief, but as a new stage in the advance of the human spirit. There is a profound distrust of the great

historic creeds springing up everywhere, and every historic Church is stirred with pent-up commotions. There is an attempt by 'Declaratory Acts' and such-like expedients to get rid of dogmas that offend the modern mind and heart, and do not tally with the modern spirit. Men sometimes ask, 'Where is all this restlessness of modern life and thought to stop. It is not designed to stop. It would mean disaster were it to stop; it would mean the end of progress. The issue of the conflict between traditional faith and the modern spirit is not doubtful. The religion that is to satisfy the modern mind must be as wide as that mind, as free as that mind. It must be in harmony with reason, it must be co-ordinate with science, it must not fear inquiry, it must not shun criticism either of its dogmas or its sacred books. It must be ready to welcome knowledge from all quarters; it must believe in Revelation as continuous and progressive; its source of authority must not be in book, or creed, or Church, but in the nature of truth and the relation of the human mind to it, and its standard of appeal must be the highest human heart and conscience trained in the spirit of Jesus Christ. In fine, the religion of the coming time must be rational, and scientific, and ethical. What we are witnessing, therefore, in the present conflict of the traditional faith with the modern spirit, is not the decay of Christianity, but the process by which it is entering upon another great era of its life.

The Church Gazette, which knows well the drift and meaning of these interesting transformations, says of this specimen; 'One distinguishing symptom of the progress to be looked for lies in the fact that views such as these are able to be called orthodox at all: they would have been ranked under a different heading twenty, and even ten, years ago.' Of course!

THEOLOGICAL SHARP PRACTICE.

WE are often strongly tempted to use the word 'aggravating,' in order to describe the way in which Channing's, Parker's and Martineau's ideas of God are being conveyed and labelled 'Trinitarian.' A clergyman of the Established Church lately told us that the essence of the doctrine of the Trinity is that God is not a Being removed from us, but that He can manifest His nature to us and in us. He told us that 'by means of the

Trinitarian conception, we can realise Him as the ever and everywhere present, the life of our inmost life, the self of our truest self.' If this is not a sort of neo-Pantheism, it is pure spiritual Theism or Unitarianism; and it is aggravating to find a modern man putting this forth in opposition to the Unitarian thought, and giving the Unitarian a whack while doing it.

All we can say is that if, by the divinity of Christ, the Church only means the divinity of man, and if the manifestation of God in Christ only bears witness to the manifestation of God in the human race, the Unitarian view has prevailed. Or, let us put it in this way :—if the Trinity testifies only to the inflowing of deity into humanity, as Son and Spirit, we are all Trinitarians; and Unitarians have been Trinitarians all along! But if so, why were Unitarians always damned?

THE MILITANT JESUS.

THE strong reformers, zealous, uncompromising, careless of themselves and not very careful of others, nearly always use strong language, and hit out without considering people's feelings: and their friends nearly always tenderly expostulate with them. A breezy brother in America cites Christ, and says;—

I can see how some quietistic friend, possibly like Martha, femininely passive and with a tremulous fear over the self-imperilling action of the Nazarene, might anxiously question his apparently reckless course, as though he sought to end his usefulness in two or three brief years. Did she not see that discretion would have saved him from the cross, and while not having it in her heart to blame him, was still inclined gently to expostulate with him, with a view to taming his outbreathing ardor and putting him upon the safe side of a Pharisaic antagonism? True, that would have killed the prophet in him, but this she did not see. His obedience was ever appearing to her in the terms of a lower imprudence. She might have said, 'Must you, O my friend, use such strong language to the Pharisees, be so fearfully outspoken as to call them hypocrites, whited sepulchres, and to charge them with

devouring the widows' substance, making clean the outside of the duty cup, seeking the uppermost seats at the feast, with the love of being called "doctor," "doctor," and of making long prayers out of doors in the spirit of a pious pretense? O Master, listen to your fearing friend. Are such words as serpents, vipers, fools and blind, children of the devil, slighers of the weightier matters of the law, proselyters who make the proselyte ten-fold more the child of hell than ever, is such, O Jesus, the language of peace and prudence? The prudent Christian of to-day, fearing the world as Jesus did not, is really ever asking the same.

INSPIRATION.

ARCHDEACON HALES is a curious sort of a Churchman. This is what he says, in *The Church Gazette* ;—

The first few chapters of the Book of Genesis, touching upon the Creation, the Temptation, the Fall, the story of Cain and Abel, the account of the Patriarchs and their ages, the Deluge, and the Tower of Babel, are poetry or allegories, some of which cannot now be explained. There may be a residuum of historic truth beneath them all, but they bring the Divine Being before the eye of the religious man, and therefore may be considered inspired, though not historical. The accounts of Abraham and his descendants have an appearance of reality, which must be tested, as far as possible, by any sidelights that may be discovered in the old libraries from Chaldea, or from any other reputable source. The same remarks apply to the exodus from Egypt, and to the conquest of the Holy Land by Joshua.

The Hebrew history contained in the Books of Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles must be read with the same reserve; and such miracles as are recorded may be no more than the imaginations or exaggerations of the unknown writers. When the expression is used, 'The word of the Lord came to such and such a person,' or some phrase of a similar import, it may be untrue; as in the case of the man of God, mentioned in I. Kings i. 5-18, where it is distinctly stated that the prophet lied. It may be the mistaken belief of the prophet, as on the occasion when Samuel ordered Saul to destroy the Amalekites, and afterwards hewed Agag in pieces when Saul had spared him. Such fierceness is opposed to the mind of Jesus, who forbade His servants to injure anyone in His defence. This view is supported by the fact that David, who carried on all his fierce wars under the asserted authority of Jehovah, was not allowed to build a temple to Him, because he had been a man of war, and had shed blood (I. Chron. xxii. 8).

In many of the Psalms there is a strange mixture of the fierce and unbridled passions of human nature, together with

some of the most intense expressions of pure religion to which the human heart could give utterance—words of peace and purity, and absolute devotion to everything lovely and exalted. One the voice of evil, the other that of the loftiest righteousness; one a warning, the other a true lesson of God.

THE QUEEN AND WAR.

IT is affirmed that when we were lately in danger of war with France, the Queen said; 'If we have to go to war with France, I hope I shall die first.' But why? The Queen has gone with a light heart to many a little war when success was certain: why, on any noble ground, should she shrink from a war with risks? In no one object has she shown such pride as in her fighting tackle. Her compliments, her congratulations and her honours have been freely and ceaselessly showered on her fighters, and on the conquerors—of the weak. Her personal Jubilee was nothing but a military and naval display, rigorously made that by herself. She did not appear to mind the horribly cruel destruction of brave men and their homes and food in India, in the depth of winter; and she seemed to revel in the bloody battue of the Soudan. We never remember a word of pity for the weak whom her fighters, her long-distance shells and her Maxims anywhere destroyed. What is the matter when the proposed fighting comes to be serious? The spectacle is not a very heroic one. But the heroic is sadly transformed. It has all run to 'good business' now.

THE PRINCE OF WALES AND RHODES.

DURING the early days of the sittings of the South Africa Committee no one was more assiduous in attendance than the Prince of Wales; and no one took more pains to shew regard for Mr. Rhodes than he. In fact, the ostentatious hand-shaking between this curious couple was one of the events of that queer inquiry.

When the fiasco came, and the finale was hushed, it was officially stated that high State

reasons made it necessary to ring down the curtain. Who was the offender, no one, not even Sir William Harcourt, would allow to be revealed.

When Rhodes' Chartered Company scandal came to light, we got very close to royalty in connection with at least one of its directors.

When Mr. Rhodes was getting whitewashed, he and Mr. Balfour visited the Prince of Wales' particular friend, Lord Rothschild.

When Mr. Rhodes was worrying the Colonial Office and the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his 'Cape to Cairo' scheme, *The Daily Chronicle* had this sinister item of news, 'It may not be without significance that the ex-Premier of the Cape spent last Sunday at Sandringham.'

The Prince of Wales may have good reasons for being so loyal to his old 'pal.'

IMPERIALISM, JINGOISM, OR DEVILRY?

The Daily Chronicle lately printed a telegram announcing that at one of our many advanced posts where a railway had been constructed, we sent in a demand for the permanent cession of the territory through which it ran. This, the native inhabitants refused; so Colonel somebody was sent with a Maxim and a thousand rounds of ammunition to enforce the demand. We wrote to *The Chronicle* on the subject, but the remonstrance was not allowed to appear.

Now if *The Chronicle* wants to know what it really is that is troubling our Liberal Israel, here is an object-lesson that might give it all the information it needs. If it wants to know what we mean by 'Jingoism,' and why we hate it, here is a case in point. What we say is that there has been too much of this devilry; and the best proof of the 'too much' is that if we now resent it and denounce it we are called 'unpatriotic,' 'little Englanders,' and Satan only knows what: and even *The Daily Chronicle* calls upon us all to accept that gory rowdy, Rudyard Kipling, as our leader into The Promised Land!

THE SOUL, HERE AND HEREAFTER.*

A DISAPPOINTING book, but a book not without interest and value;—possibly of great interest and value to an orthodox high churchman. But that is just our difficulty. To us, the book looks like a quaint old curiosity shop, or a Drury Lane repository of old theatrical properties. Let us look round at a few specimens.

Here is a long quotation from the Song of Solomon, a specially sensuous passage (chap. v. 10-16), which Mr. Hutton appears to accept as a 'description of Christ.'

Here is a reference to 'The Fall'; 'The first sin was the taking of a visible sign—the fruit—in defiance of God's command'; the consequence of which was 'the sense of lost friendship with God.' What can that mean, as history?

Here is a picture of death, as 'a curse and a punishment—unnatural, horrible to man, and revolting to God.' What nonsense! Death is as natural as life. Has Mr. Hutton ever considered what the state of the world would have been to-day if there had been no death? Would there have been cradle room for another baby?

Here is an old evil-smelling doctrine concerning the departed:—'The soul is, at the moment of its passing out of the body, either "lost" or "saved." In this there can be no change after death.'

Here is our battered old friend, the resurrection of the body: 'The body is needful to the soul's entire well-being: The body shall return to the ground whence at the first it came. But not for ever.' That reminds us of another well-worn and worn-out old notion,—the immediate manufacture of man out of dust, in which Mr. Hutton devoutly believes.

Here is the whole theory of Sacerdotalism in its grossest form: 'Grace is now embodied in material signs: it comes through them, even as grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' 'Baptism bestows life, and the Eucharist actually contains the life of the soul, Jesus Christ, and not merely His grace.' 'Extreme Unction removes the remains of sin from the soul . . . and sometimes restores bodily health.' The marriage of divorced persons, 'guilty or innocent,' is mere living together, and is not 'Holy Matrimony.' If the so-called marriage is celebrated in a Church 'the ceremony is a sacrilege.' But all this is precisely what the modern man has to deny, and, if necessary, fight.

Here is perhaps the most hopeless curiosity of all; 'There is but one source of reliable knowledge—revelation. Revelation comes to us (1) through the voice of God speaking in the Holy Scripture, the *verbum Dei scriptum*; and (2) through the voice of God speaking through the Church—the *verbum Dei traditum*':—not a word about the revelations of God in Nature and Human Nature, and the revelations of God in the evolution of the Human Race and Civilisation.

All this is sheer obscurantism: and a book which is based upon it can have very little value now. But, as we have said, it contains many quaint things which have a sort of museum value, and even a living value to those who think there is any living meaning in such old-world leavings.

* 'The Soul, here and hereafter.' By R. E. Hutton, Chaplain of St. Margaret's, East Grinstead. London: Longmans, Green, & Co.

ANGELS' WINGS.*

WE have Edward Carpenter here in a new and somewhat unexpected light,—as Music critic, Art critic and exponent of the Art of Life, from the purely artistic side. An important part of the work is given to Beethoven, his earlier and later sonatas and the symphonies. Other special references are to Wagner, Millet and Whitman, between whom certain curious affinities are pointed out. The subjects discussed glide from Angels' wings to Nature and Realism in Art, the Human Body in its relation to Art, and Traditions, Convention and the Gods.

Mr. Carpenter does not start out to prove anything. He takes a walk with us, and makes it very delightful, and then goes with us into the house, to the pictures and the music, and he is more delightful still. At the close, he probably found it necessary to explain what he has been driving at, and he puts it in this winning way,—‘Throughout the foregoing papers there has run in a somewhat casual and thread-like way the idea that the evolution of the Fine Arts during the period of civilization is leading up in the present time towards their amalgamation again with actual Life, and towards the reconstruction of Life itself as a thing of beauty and indeed the greatest of the Arts;’—a truly noble idea, which we are bound to say is discernible enough from first to last, but more as a tone than a theme.

Of course, there are, in these refined and subtle Essays, many beautiful thoughts presented in a charming manner, but the speciality of the book is its fresh and winsome freedom from the conventional atmosphere of the mere book-maker, and its original though not over deep insights into Life.

NOTES BY THE WAY.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF DOGMA.—A bright little paper, called *The Temple*, says, ‘Our era is one of practical realization above all else. All law finds its fulfilment in love; so we shall find in the signs and passwords handed down to us by the fathers a meaning by them comprehended only in part. Taking their very own words, we shall open what to them was a sealed book.’

This is a very fair lift to the church reformers who put modern meanings into ancient creeds. What *The Temple* suggests we would gladly see done, but the trouble begins when we remember that the church clergy are pledged to the creeds as they stand,—though this is denied or disputed by the same. It would clear the air immensely if some authoritative declaration could be put forth, giving to the clergy freedom of interpretation (and gloss).

*Angels' Wings. A Series of Essays on Art and its Relation to Life. By Edward Carpenter. London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co.

THE BELL NUISANCE.—*The Church Gazette* says: 'The truth is that too many clergy have an imperfect knowledge of their legal rights over bells. As incumbents they have rights, and these include the ringing of the bells for all legal services, viz., for morning and evening prayer, and at certain other times, limited by the customs of the parishes. But the parishioners have also rights, and bells are no more privileged than hurdy gurdies or barrel organs. If material damage or injury can be proved by unnecessary ringing, the incumbent, as tenant for life of the bells, would, in the opinion of a competent authority, be liable for damages and the costs, in such cases usually heavy. Luckily for many incumbents the parishioners do not know or are too lazy to use their legal powers.'

In Chicago, they are suffering from the bell nuisance, too. An American paper says; 'The people are really distressed because the city council will not suppress the ringing of those disturbing church bells, which they say have become a terrible nuisance, because the petitioners' early morning slumbers are interrupted by the bells' almost ceaseless clamour, commencing in some districts so early as 4 o'clock in the morning. If there is a lull for a brief period, and they are again lost in sleep, they are again awakened by the noisy chimes. The "sweet and quiet peace of the holy Sabbath," of which the clergy are always boasting, and are constantly labouring to make more silent, is thus disturbed in the interest of that same priestly class, who only wish the day profaned in their interest.

'It may be, after all, God's ears—for the Bible tells us He has ears to hear—are vexed because of these senseless sounds, and that that is His reason for allowing the lightnings and the cyclones to demolish the stately steeples in which those sleep-disturbing, nerve-shattering and Sabbath-breaking tintinnabulators are suspended. If so, He would do humanity an absolute service if He would sweep them all away.'

CHURCH FUNCTIONS.—'The Church Gazette' is responsible for the following: 'The ecclesiastical knowledge of these ladies is quite surprising. I was recently talking to one, and had occasion to mention the "Procession of the Holy Ghost." For a moment she looked puzzled. "Oh, yes," she remarked, confidently, "I recollect now. My brother did not have it last year, but we shall have it next time. I think it is so pretty. The banners and everything are white; are they not?" It was my turn to look puzzled, but I did not explain. I thought it wisest to leave it to her brother.'

A CHILD'S WAY OF PUTTING IT.—A writer in 'The Banner of Light' vouches for the truth of this:—

A teacher in a kindergarten school was examining a class in Scripture knowledge. She asked whether any of them could tell a story of something that had been learned or heard. One of the number, an enthusiastic little Miss of four years, held up her hand, saying eagerly that she could. The teacher told her to go on with it, and she lisped out the following:—

'Dod made a darden, and Dod made Adam and Eve and

put them in the garden, and put apple trees in the darden. And Eve picked an apple and ate it. An Eve dave Adam an apple, and he ate it. And Dod was mad. And Dod said: "Adam, what for you eat that Apple?" And Adam said: "Eve made me eat it." And Dod was mad, and Dod said: "Dod damn you."

Shocking? not at all. Perfectly orthodox, perfectly simple, perfectly ingenuous.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH.—The Rev. C. E. Beeby, B.D., has published a Sermon on 'The relation of a miraculous birth to a sinless Christ.' It is a keenly reasoned argument, the drift of which may be gathered from the following sentences, concerning the popular 'confusion of spiritual and physical processes':—

'It is open to me to say that I do not believe that sin and sinlessness are dependent on physiological processes, that to my mind Divine Sonship is a question of spiritual and not physical generation. Otherwise, in order to be truly "sons of God," either we should all be born miraculously, or the Second Adam should have been the natural progenitor of the new race of the "sons of God." It is become a matter of organic generation and no longer of action of the Divine Spirit on the spirits of men. St. John says: "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." It is spiritual generation that is here spoken of in terms of physical generation. The commonly received view of the miraculous birth is, to my mind, a confusion of spiritual generation with physical processes.'

Mr. Beeby sets forth a view of 'conceived by the Holy Ghost,' which any rationalist might accept. In endorsing the belief in 'the operation of the Holy Spirit in the conception of Jesus,' he carries the fact into the spiritual sphere, leaving unmolested the ordinary laws of physical life.

SCHOOL BOARD 'RELIGION.'—A correspondent writes; 'This week I have had to do battle for the Father's love. I found one of my boys, not quite five years old, was being taught the abominable doctrine of "Hell," at the Board School he attends; so I wrote the head mistress last night to the effect that "I was pained and annoyed to find that my boy was being taught the blasphemous doctrine of "Hell" at her school, and I must therefore request he be exempted from (so called) "religious instruction."'

'This experience proves to me conclusively that there is only one true position regarding education in Board Schools, namely, that it should be free and secular. What a bogie that word "secular" is to the average mind! To me it seems very simple. Secular and Religious surely are interchangeable terms! Facts about the Universe cannot truly be split up into parts; one part pertaining to the Truth of God, and the other—to whom?'

'STONING THE PROPHETS?'—We take the following from an American paper; 'Rev. Solon Lauer has resigned the pastorate of the First Unitarian Church of San Diego,

Cal., and is now taking a needed vacation at his home in Fallbrook. Mr. Lauer is an able writer and thinker, and dares to express his views in plain terms upon the subject of Spiritualism.'

Is this another attempt to crush an honest man who keeps his vow to tell all the truth he knows? Mr. Lauer is a splendid thinker and writer, and the Unitarians ought to be proud of him. What is it that so often makes the loudest professors of liberty the least ready to respond to the free? Is the explanation this,—that what looks like a strong love of liberty is only a strong assertion of self? This, of course, would result in a certain impatience of things deemed 'impossible' or 'absurd.'

'MOURNING.'—Dr. Bayard Holmes says: 'I hardly know about insanity, but I am sure that melancholia is frequently aggravated and even caused by the heavy crape veils and trappings of conventional woe.'

THE JEW-BAITING MANIA.—A friend writes to say that the sharp saying referred to on page 375 (last year) was spoken by Disraeli in the House of Commons, in his early days.

THE NEW CATECHISM.—Of the new Catechism, *The Church Review* says, rather smartly; 'The appearance of "An Evangelical Free Church Catechism" is a sign of the times. It is intended to show that Dissenters have a definite faith, and it proves that they have not so far departed from the faith of the Gospel as their coquetting with the Higher Criticism would have led most people to fear. The catechism will hardly be acceptable to such persons as Quakers, Salvationists, and Plymouth Brethren, but we gladly recognise the Churchiness of its tone. The leading feature of its arrangement is its division into fifty-two questions and answers—one for each week in the year. A great many of the answers are so vaguely worded that they are patient of divers interpretations, but if the use of the Catechism become at all general, the Church ought to reap a harvest of Dissenters in the not distant future.'

WHERE IS CHRIST'S CHRISTIANITY?—*The Daily Chronicle* prints the following telegram from China;—

'The Tsung-li-Yamen has also consented to pay 30,000 dols. as compensation to the relatives of the murdered missionary, Mr. Fleming. The two men implicated in the crime have been beheaded, one of the leading military mandarins who was concerned has been banished, and two civil officials have been degraded. The missionaries in the neighbourhood have addressed a telegram of thanks to the British Legation for the success which has attended its efforts to avenge the murder.'

These missionaries, we are told, make it their first business to circulate 'The Word of God,' and to 'preach Christ.' But Christ said; 'I say unto you, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you'; and 'The Word of

God' elsewhere says;—'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.'

But the Christianity of Christ seems to have gone quite out of fashion with most official persons: and 'Avenge Gordon,' or avenge anybody, seems to be the gospel for the day.

ARE WE CIVILISED?—We have been looking over an accumulation of belated pamphlets and magazines. Amongst them is a late number of 'Humanity,' in which a writer, signing himself 'Humanity,' says;

'I wish that all your readers might see the report of the Cheriton otter hunt, described in the *Western Morning News* of July 18. The meanness, the cowardice, the cruelty of it, make one blush for our boasted civilisation. The hounds swam the otter up and down a big pool—in which we are told that he was "roughly handled"—for two hours. Then he got into some rushes, and was lost. When found, he was again "roughly handled" by the pack, but got into another pool. The remainder of the story shall be given in the narrator's own words:

"Repeatedly tallied both on land and water, and once up a tree, the game old otter stood no chance, and at last, after a bold attempt to force the lower stickle, took to land, and was rolled over in the open, after as fine a bit of sport as was ever seen with otter hounds."

'The man who was brought before the magistrates the other day for tying a rat by the leg, and setting a dog to worry it, certainly engaged in much less cruel sport than those who harried the otter to death.'

But 'Humanity' has a wrong standard for this 'Happy Christian land.' At least half of us are only veneered savages—or worse.

HEROES.—To what have we come? All the London newspapers, recording the bestial drunkenness of certain soldiers, from which one died, headed the filthy story with 'Death of a Soudan hero,' or something of that kind: but all used the word 'hero.' We have had enough of that sickening business any way: but—'hero'! What shall we say when we get a real hero, if ever we do again?

AMERICA AND THE FILIPINOS.—We are sorely distressed and disappointed at what has happened in the Philippines, and are afraid that, not the old love of liberty, but the new love of plunder, is responsible for it. We hoped much of America, and we wanted it to be unlike Europe in this matter of lust and greed. The Filipinos have long struggled for independence, and it was the duty of the American people to help them to win it. As the matter stands, we are sorry to believe that this hideous slaughter of the people, 'rightly struggling to

be free,' has had behind it the vulgar desire of the capitalist and the trust and syndicate promoters to get hold of 'a good thing'—at any price. It is very disappointing and very miserable.

NOTES ON BOOKS.

'MICHAEL FARADAY: HIS LIFE AND WORK.' By Silvanus P. Thompson, D.Sc., F.R.S. London: Cassell & Co. This winsome book is one of 'The Century Science Series':—'winsome,' but, of course, only to be fully comprehended and enjoyed by those who know something of electricity. The interest, however, is divided between the 'life,' which everyone can enter into, and the 'work,' which only the initiated can appreciate. Dr. Thompson has deftly blended both, and produced an eminently readable book. It would be a first-rate present for a bright young electrician.

'PECULIAR PEOPLE. An open letter to Mr. Justice Wills on his sentencing Thomas George Senior to four months' imprisonment with hard labour, for obeying the Bible.' By G. W. Foote. London: R. Forder. This is a very incisive exposure of the really grotesque position in which we are. The Epistle of James most distinctly tells us to do what poor Senior was put into prison for doing: and Mr. Foote has his knife in the law and the judge, up to the end of the handle. It is unanswerable. Still, we are sorry to see that Mr. Foote uses this wretched case merely for an attack upon Christ and Christianity.

'WHAT IS LIFE? OR WHERE ARE WE? WHAT ARE WE? WHENCE DID WE COME? AND WHITHER DO WE GO?' By Frederick Hovenden, F.L.S., &c. London: Chapman & Hall. The wonderful title of this animated book contains, as the man in the street would say, 'a large order.' Barring such minor matters as the rise and fall of the Greek and Roman Empires, and similar incidents by the way, the title of this book includes everything that concerns the human race. Mr. Hovenden is not deterred by that. He is very brave, very buoyant, and very confident. He is a sheer chemist and accounts for everything by chemical action. He says, 'there can be no doubt that the key by which the orderly phenomena of Nature can be unfolded, lies in the hands of the physicist: hence the whole of the work is built up from physical phenomena.' But there can be doubt about that, and there is. Mr. Hovenden holds one key, a very important, perhaps the most important, at certain stages; but there are other keys. He will be, he is, soon stopped without them.

The book burns occasionally with little lava spurts against Religion, and concludes with a vehement attack upon the Bible and Christianity; but we detect the animus. Violent as

it is, it has beneath it a love of truth : but it is crude, unjust and extremely indiscriminating. If this sharp critic were less sweeping in his generalisations, and more modest in the proportions of his inferences, he would be nearer the truth. But it must be admitted that his peculiarities have perhaps helped him to produce this very readable and thought-provoking book.

'ONE AND ALL GARDENING, 1899. A popular Annual for Amateurs, Allotment-holders and Working Gardeners.' Edited by E. O. Greening. London: The Agricultural and Horticultural Association, 3, Agar Street, Strand. A remarkably useful and pretty work of over 200 pages, and sold at the absurd price of twopence. It is full of information and pretty pictures (some spoiled in printing). A novel and most interesting feature is a series of about twenty little Essays or Homilies in praise of gardening, with as many portraits of the writers.

'SONGS OF HAPPY LIFE, FOR SCHOOLS, HOMES AND BANDS OF MERCY.' Second edition, revised. Compiled by Sarah J. Eddy. London: G. Bell and Sons.—Music and words, true to the pleasant title. There are 108 pieces. A very large number of composers have been drawn upon for these bright tunes. Well worth attention.

'ETHICS OF THE GREAT RELIGIONS': by C. T. Gorham. London: Watts and Co.—A useful and telling little work, setting forth meeting-places, in an acceptable way. The book is nowhere deep, but it is everywhere discriminating, though a few of the author's remarks on Jesus are rather strained. As shewing the ethical oneness of all religions, it might be very wholesome and instructive, as an alternative book for use in the old-fashioned Bible class. It is only one shilling.

FOR JENNY AND JOHN.

A NEW KIND OF SIGN.

BENNY is a little lame boy, the only son of his mother, and she a poor widow. He had never been out of the city; and his knowledge of grass was limited to the fine lawns with their sign, 'Keep off the grass.' One morning last June his mother took him for the first time to the great common on the outskirts of the city.

The wide stretch of meadow, with the signs 'Common' on its border, caught his eye at once; and, clutching his mother's gown, and bobbing on as fast as he could, he cried: 'Oh! hurry, hurry, mamma! It don't say "Keep off the grass!" here: it says, "Come on!"'

THE UNCONQUERABLE HOPE.

I THINK Heaven will not shut for evermore,
 Without a knocker left upon the door,
 Lest some belated wanderer should come
 Heart-broken, asking just to die at home,
 So that the Father will at last forgive,
 And looking on His face that soul shall live.
 I think there will be Watchmen through the night,
 Lest any, afar off, turn them to the light;
 That He who loved us into life must be
 A Father infinitely Fatherly,
 And, groping for Him, these shall find their way
 From outer dark, through twilight, into day.
 I could not sing the song of Harvest Home,
 Thinking of those poor souls that never come;
 I could not joy for Harvest gathered in,
 If any souls, like tares and twitch of sin,
 Were flung out by the Farmer to the fire,
 Whose smoke of torment, rising high and higher,
 Should fill the universe for evermore.

Such mournful eyes from out their night would gleam
 And haunt for ever all my happy dream!
 I could not take my fill for thinking of
 Those empty places in the heart of Love.

The New World's poorest emigrant will lend
 A kindly hand to help a poorer friend.
 And I must pray to God from out my bliss
 For those who are beyond all help but His—
 Pray and repray, the same old prayer anew;
 Forgive them, Lord, they know not what they do.

Dear God, it seems to me that Love must be
 The Missionary of Eternity;—
 Must still find work, in worlds beyond the grave,
 So long as there's a single soul to save.

—GERALD MASSEY ('A Tale of Eternity.')

MOTHER'S DEAD.

EVERYBODY is so sad.
 Mother's dead.
 No one now can make us glad.
 Mother's dead.
 Coming home from school to-day,
 Father met me on the way;—
 Tried to speak;—could hardly say;—
 'Mother's dead.'

What to do I do not know.
 O I loved her, loved her, so!
 Dear God, let me, let me go
 To mother—dead.